

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Urban Design Committee

DATE, TIME AND

PLACE OF MEETING:

Wednesday, November 3, 2004, 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2nd Floor, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Michael Eckert, Third World Oforah, Dennis Scheer, Gordon Scholz and Scott Sullivan present. JoAnne Kissel and Kim Todd absent.

Others: Marvin Krout, Derek Miller, Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE

OF THE MEETING:

Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

Mr. Scheer called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Notes of October 6, 2004

Mr. Scholz moved approval of the October 6, 2004 meeting notes, seconded by Mr. Eckert. Eckert, Scholz and Scheer voting 'yes'; Oforah abstaining; Kissel, Sullivan and Todd absent.

Amendments to Lincoln Municipal Code addressing streetscape and landscape requirements (Derek Miller, Planning)

Scott Sullivan arrived shortly after discussion on this item began.

Marvin Krout, Planning Department Director, stated that they will bring the information on the streetscape and landscape requirements to the Planning Commission in January for public hearing. He is seeking the Committee's input on this issue. He noted that there are two major packages, major streetscapes and subdivision amendments.

Last spring, the Mayor's Development Streamlining Committee recommended ways to streamline several processes. A few years ago, two sets of amendments dealing with the visual appearance of the community were placed on pending by the Planning Commission. One of those is called entryway corridors, which was a very extensive set of guidelines. The other set of amendments is formerly known as the public way corridors amendments. It deals with designing to provide enough right-of-way for the new major arterial streets. One of the main concepts was to have wider right-of-way of 130 feet. Other pieces of that package dealt with improving the visual appearance of the community. The Planning Commission and City Council since adopted the Comprehensive Plan which stated a standard of 120 feet of right-of-way for new arterials in new areas. This has been a source of controversy as some people feel that much right-of-way is not needed.

A new proposal for major streetscape standards has been drafted and includes the following: increasing screening density for parking lots along major streets or across the street from residential zones; extending low screening to include driveways and queuing areas; screening refuse/loading/storage/work areas and ground level mechanical equipment; requiring a minimum 6 foot landscape area in all commercial/industrial districts to avoid screening loopholes; increasing tree planting density in parking lots and requiring shade trees; requiring landscaping to soften fences built along residential lots backing to major streets and allowing the outer portion of the right-of-way to be treated as lot easement for the

landscaping area; adding provisions for administrative waivers regarding new standards; allowing land beyond 50 feet from the centerline of new arterials to be dedicated as easements and reducing the current 50 foot front yard requirement to 40 feet; and prohibiting new billboards along expressways.

There is also another set of standards regarding the streamlining efforts which have to do with reducing time and simplifying the process to get guarantees for street trees and sidewalks along arterials.

Mr. Krout noted that the reaction from the development community is a concern that we do not need these standards. He feels that there could be some opposition with these standards, but he believes there is community support.

Mr. Scheer stated his opinion is that the community should not back away from a strong proposal because there is opposition in discussion. If there are compromises that come from opposition, that is one thing. But he believes the proposal is reasonable and is important in order for the City to be visually pleasing.

Mr. Eckert commented that allowing the easement to take place in the setback should hopefully appease the development community. That was a concern because of reducing the amount of developable land.

Mr. Scholz stated that he is pleased that we are addressing the interstate issue. He asked if we are in a similar circumstance as Omaha and asked if it would behoove us to address the sign issue prior to dealing with the corridor. Mr. Krout stated that the off-premise signs prohibition for interstates is at the Planning Commission.

Mr. Oforah asked if the 6 foot landscape proposal is being suggested for right-of-way. Mr. Krout responded that it is for private property. The older business districts have minimal setbacks, parking is allowed in the front yard and there are no landscape requirements. The older areas have almost no standards, and he believes those are the areas that we need to focus on more.

Mr. Oforah commented that there will need to be standards in place for the 120 feet of right-of-way regardless of the landscaping requirement. Mr. Krout stated that some of the criticism has been more in the cross-section than the right-of-way. He agrees that there are many places where the 28 feet medial is not going to have to be broken in order to have dual left turn lanes in the middle of a mile.

Mr. Scheer stated that as the City extends to the fringe, there will have to be some kind of recall back to what the City core looks like, and the City core has trees between the curb and sidewalk in many instances. He believes this is important to have a contiguous City.

Mr. Scheer departed at 3:45 p.m.

Mr. Oforah asked if the easement is within the 120 feet of right-of-way. Mr. Krout responded that it is within the 120 feet of right-of-way.

Mr. Krout thanked the Committee for their comments and stated that if they have further questions or comments to contact him.

Misc.

Mr. Zimmer stated that the City Council adopted the Neighborhood Design Standards with one change. The change addresses the requirement for new infill construction to match the approximate floor level of

the majority of surrounding buildings. The Planning Commission was concerned it would make houses inaccessible and suggested that it could be waived for handicapped persons but it would still have to fit the neighborhood. Mr. Zimmer re-wrote the requirement to state that upon demonstration that a project could not be made accessible, the Director could approve a project provided there were measurements taken to achieve accessibility.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the status of Green Gateau. Mr. Zimmer stated that they have installed their sidewalk cafe and it has two laser cut steel backlit signs on the fence. The Sidewalk Cafe Ordinance states that you can put the name of the establishment on the fence as long as you meet the sign code and the zoning code. The zoning code says that you cannot do it, so they are directly contradictory. However, it may be allowed as there are ways to allow signs to extend into the right-of-way. This is a good example to make that argument.

The meeting concluded at 4:11 p.m.